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# THE SEWANEE REVIEW

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## A BATTLE-FIELD PLAYGROUND

We have the Duke of Wellington as authority for believing that Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton. But what if you look at it from the other side? What a splendid playground the battle-field of Waterloo would make! Perhaps the Peace Society, which condemns tin soldiers as immoral, would object to putting a battle-field to such uses. When I was a boy in the early nineties, I had never heard of the Peace Society, and 'our crowd' in Petersburg had for playground not one battle-field, but a dozen.

To the imaginative Southerner the war is what the nine years around sacred Troy were to Homer's auditors. For that very reason its Iliad has not yet been written; it is still too far from being ancient history. Yet even when it is written, after centuries have passed and the scars of the deepest wounds have vanished, the heart of the South will throb with quickest, painfullest interest, not for wise Nestor, and patient, steadfast Ulysses, and unconquerable Achilles, and the thousand black ships that came to sack the 'city of Priam,' but for the Trojans, who on the other side, as Homer says in words that to a Southerner read like a prophecy, "armed themselves within their city, fewer in number, but eager so to fight in battle, eager for the dire necessity of their children and their wives. So all the gates were thrown open and out poured the host, infantry and charioteers, and mighty was the roar of battle." And among all the defenders of the sacred soil none will ever receive such devotion as their godlike Hector, who knowing from the first

the day would come when Holy Troy must fall, yet faltered at no portents in the skies, whose one omen was to fight for his country.

I cannot remember a time when the war was not a familiar thing to me, but I can remember exactly when I first read of the Tale of Troy. It was in Percy's *Reliques*, in a ballad of which I remember only one line, "And corn now grows where Troy town stood." Even then I remember the siege of Troy seemed to me a type of the war, and Hector only an earlier Lee, "for Hector alone stayed Ilion from its fall, and his people honored him like a god."

The war of a whole people leaves its mark even on the second and third generations. In our house, as in all the others in town, hung pictures of Lee and Jackson. Our picture of Stonewall was a little portrait in oils, from a photograph, signed 1864. Sometimes as a special favor our mother would show us the bureau drawer where her treasures were kept, a button from Lee's uniform, and a letter he had written her when she was sixteen, rallying her in his courtly way on her 'beaux' in the artillery. To Grandfather the greatest figures of history were Moses and St. Paul among the ancients and Lee among the moderns. Grandfather was to us boys and many other older people himself a type of manhood, wise, patient, generous, and loving, and what he was and believed had on his fatherless grandchildren more influence than any other thing. As he looked back over fifty years of service to his parish, the war and the siege of Petersburg, and in the siege his interviews with General Lee, when duty sent him to plead for the lives of deserters, formed the centre of his life.

Among the first things I can remember are the evenings in his study as he read us *The Talisman* and *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*, as we sat around the fire, or the hours when our mother or our grandmother told us of the summer and winter of 1864, when people were waked sometimes by a lull in the cannonading, and night after night the shells streamed across the sky like meteors. In Lafayette Street, where they had walked trembling to church only twenty-five years before, we still found fragments of shell and canister whenever the rain

furrowed the unpaved roadway. Later, when I went at nine years old to 'dame school,' an unexploded shell, lying under the corner of the house, as big as the globe in geography lesson, was there to remind us of Miss Mary's favorite story of the other bomb which had demolished her kitchen and in the irony of history killed old An' Mary Sweet, the cook.

At that school and later, we had both sides of history presented to us — one side in the text-book, which assumed quite as a matter of course that there was only the Northern side, and the other by the teacher, who gave us the history which then existed still unwritten in the South. When we recited Cæsar to a veteran of four years service, we not only learned to understand the campaign against the Nervii, but by way of commentary heard incidents of the retreat up the Peninsula, and of the battle of the Crater and Five Forks.

How could the war be ancient history to us, surrounded by it as we were at home and in school? Up Washington Street, Grandmother used to tell us, Grant's army had streamed for two days past our front gate, marching in pursuit of Lee after the evacuation on the 2nd of April.

There was a story, if not true certainly nobly invented, which used to bring that April day vividly before us. Early in the morning of that Sunday, Uncle Jack Hill, an old negro white-washer and gardener, found a dead Confederate artilleryman on the steps of the Presbyterian Church opposite my Grandfather's house. Jack Hill often worked for the family though he belonged to the Meades, our neighbors; so he told my Grandfather, who came and read on a scrap of paper pinned to the dead boy's breast, the words, "Please give this man Christian burial. Washington Artillery." Everywhere the town was in confusion. The Mayor had gone out to meet General Ord and surrender the public property, not a wagon was to be had, and inquiries about the man were useless. He must be buried where he was, as his comrades had begged. So Uncle Jack and my Grandfather dug a grave in the churchyard where the dead man lay, and with the old slave for congregation he read the church office for the burial of the dead. The forlorn funeral was in progress when the Federal Army entered, and as the head of the first column

marched past with rattling drums and fluttering banners, some rough spirits in the ranks with the callousness of soldiers called out jeeringly, "Good mornin', Parson. Puttin' Johnny Reb in the ice-box, are you?" Instantly the captain of the leading company gave the sharp order, "Silence in the ranks! Company, halt! Present Ar-r-r-ms! Forward march!"—and the blue files swept by in salute to the dead, a rebuke to the scoffers and an earnest of better days to dawn far in the future.

Nearly all our friends were enthusiastic hunters and bird-dog fanciers, but as we had no shotgun or B. B. rifle we could take no part in the 'bird' (which means quail) and rabbit shooting in the fall, or the cruel robin slaughtering in spring. Still we developed the hunting fever as strongly as the others, and with it the passion for collecting, and this combined with three other causes to turn us toward the battle-fields every Saturday and Sunday. These other causes were Uncle John's visit, the Virginia Sunday, and the *Historical and Industrial Guide to Petersburg*.

Uncle John had delighted us with visits often enough before, but a visit from him when I was about twelve made an epoch for us. We knew him, not as a minister, but as our only and precious Uncle, who knew the most delightful songs children ever heard. Perhaps he learned "The Ram of Darby" and "Marri-ed to a Mer-mi-ed at the Bottume of the Sea" in the trenches at Drewry's Bluff, perhaps he learned them before or after that at college, but we had never heard much about the war from him, until one Saturday he took us all out to the most famous place our town boasts—the Crater.

At first sight, in spite of the lurid name, the Crater is a very ordinary spot, simply a shallow hole, like a half-filled Virginia ice-house of unusual proportions and irregular shape, densely overgrown in coarse grasses and dewberry vines. In the bottom second-growth pines and cedars throw their thick shade on ground which forty-seven years ago was an infernal slaughter pit beneath the intolerable sun. There the Federal soldiers, who had charged and taken the mined redoubt, and found themselves then unable to advance or retreat, were packed in masses, the dead and the living together, under the July heat and the shells

and bullets of their enemies. From that day, when I first saw a battle-field and had the game explained to me by one who had seen the pawns, himself one of them, moved hither and thither by the hands of the mightiest players of our times, I have always felt the fascination of war. Even a boy could admire the brilliancy of the stroke devised by the Pennsylvania enigneur, Colonel Pleasants. He planned to drive a great mine under the Confederate centre, blow it bodily into the air, and then before the smoke of the explosion had dissolved, throw an army corps into the breach, and seizing Blandford Cemetery, cut Lee's army in two.

As we stood on the brink of the Crater and looked across the fields in the direction of the Federal forts, Uncle John showed us the long line of 'ailanthus' trees that trace the sunken gallery of the mine from the Crater out across the corn field to the valley through which the Norfolk Railroad runs. Directly in front of us was Fort Morton, now the Taylor farm, then to the left and north Fort Haskell, distinguished by its group of especially lofty pines, next still farther to the left Fort Stedman on Hare's Hill, and farthest away of all, beyond the Appomattox, the flats of Chesterfield County, and everywhere pines on the horizon. Nothing can exceed the resignation of the landscape in this part of Virginia. Infinitely minor-toned, in front stretches the sandy soil with straggling corn-stalks, behind on the near horizon stands the wall of pines, firm, dark, uncompromising, with here and there a higher tree lifting its ragged top above its fellows. The face of nature wears an expression of patient endurance.

A few steps from the Crater itself, in the clapboard shed called the Museum, we saw arranged in boxes and bins, on shelves and hung from hooks, the relics of the 'fight — bent and dented gun-barrels, hand grenades for the "forlorn hope," rusty picks and spades, the hub of a cannon wheel, shells of all sizes, round and elongated, with bands of lead to fit the grooves of rifled guns, shrivelled shoes with the ankle-bones still rattling in the leather like the kernel of a dried walnut, and above all, the Minié balls, some thousands of the millions of rounds that sowed our fields of Petersburg with their sterile crop.

What innumerable fantastic shapes! You would never believe unless you had seen them, that lead could assume so many strange forms as we saw that day. Some were flattened out into tiny wheels, some blunt and snub nosed, like a model of an elephant's foot, others were buried deep in the hearts of trees, and afterwards cut in two in the saw-mill, and there were two, the famous two that have found their way into history. These had met in mid-air, point to point, and form ever since a solid wheel of metal, welded into one by the heat of the blow. Like little Caspar we stood open-eyed before the dry bones and the broken bayonets, but we did not need to ask what they fought each other for. We knew our father had won his captaincy on that very field for holding his gun-crew to their work at the Crater.

With that day began our explorations of the battle-fields in search of stores of relics for our own collection. And here the Virginia Sunday helped us. Who has not heard all the changes rung on the New England Conscience? Like Virginia Hospitality, like all other national virtues, it is far from being without honor in its own country. But the Virginia Sunday is but little known still in the country at large, even though there is more Puritanism to-day in Virginia, and has been for a half century, than in Massachusetts.

Our Saturday mornings were devoted to learning the Sunday School lesson for the next day; on Saturday nights we rehearsed, too often; we thought, the next morning's hymns; and Sunday brought services, morning and night, with only Sunday reading between, such as *Tales Illustrating the Church Catechism* and *Pilgrim's Progress*. Games of all kinds and visiting were taboo, but walking was allowed, if not at first encouraged, as a compromise between devotion and profane amusement. So Saturday and Sunday were regularly devoted to the battle-fields. Finally, to guide us and give us a programme, we found a book, the *Historical and Industrial Guide to Petersburg*. It was a precious discovery. In addition to accurate pictures of the Court House and the Baptist Church, and several more or less world-famous plug-tobacco manufactories, it contained a short history of the Crater, and best of all a map of the Federal and

Confederate lines for the whole siege. With this map we could find our way to Federal forts far and near, from the Appomattox around the whole irregular curve to the headquarters at Poplar Grove, and back on the line of contravallation. On the inner line we learned to know all our forts and salients, from Gracie's Salient to Fort Gregg, whose pines crown the steep clay banks where the Confederates made their last stand at Petersburg.

It was glorious to set out for a walk on a bright Saturday morning in October. After passing the red brick houses of Bollingbrook or Lombard Street, the former court end of town, where the aristocracy of Glasgow tobacco merchants flourished a hundred years ago, you crossed Lieutenant Run, and leaving behind you the smelly negro streets of lower Blandford, came out on the road to Prince George Court House. Hardly three miles behind the run was White Hill, the plantation which was to us the type of all our Mother's happiness in the golden age before the war. There her dearest cousins and playmates had lived, and she had visited oftenest and most eagerly. Already in my boyhood the great square white house on the hill between the road and the river stood gaunt and dilapidated. War and Reconstruction had done their work upon it. The shutters were gone, the front porch hung perilously propped with bits of weather-boarding torn from the sides, and the pillars and other wood-work showed marks of bullets. From the porch the New York *Tribune's* correspondent saw the earliest of the battles around Petersburg — the blue lines skirmishing across the open plain and through the smoke-enveloped apple orchards, green with June.

Our favorite spot near White Hill, and the goal of many walks, was a small enclosed five-gun battery built on the extreme end of a ridge between White Hill and Fort Stedman. We called it "Our Fort," *par excellence*, it was so high and cool and shady. We loved to eat our apples and bread and preserves there on the parapet, in the comforting sense of achievement that followed the heart-breaking pull through the swampy, crawfishy corn-field in the bottom below it, and the still harder rush up the steep, gravelly hillside to "storm the breast works." At the top of the hill you had the six-foot ditch and the ten-foot



embankment to climb, and the "last one up" was always "a ring-tailed monkey." Once seated at your ease on the top of the parapet of Our Fort, with your back to the big pine in the corner, or in the low horizontal limbs of the hickory that swept the edge of the embankment, you had at your feet the velvety plain of broom-sedge stretching away to Fort Stedman. On breezy days the fields, waist deep in sedge, rippled and waved with alternate brown and silver-gray, as the wind veered and exposed now the under, now the upper surface. Such a day in fall — when the clumps of sweet-gums islanded among the sedge, are rustling their gold and crimson leaves and the long grass waves peacefully over the footprints of vanished armies — that is the time to learn the loveliness and charm to be found in South-Side Virginia. And not in October only. At the end also of a summer day, as the sun shot his level beams across the fields, and the trees and the tall lush meadow-grasses topped with feathery sprays of seed were transfigured against the glory of the west, I have seen such a field become Arcadia.

From the first I felt dimly that broom-straw fields were beautiful, but that did not prevent us from setting them on fire as we passed through, for the delight of beating out the circle of flame with pine boughs. It was reckless, wasteful play, in which we risked our hair and eyebrows and the owners of the land their young timber. Still it was great sport, and when the broom-straw was burnt off, it was much easier to find the tins of rusty cartridge boxes and dented canteens. In some of the forts the tins lay in great numbers among the bricks from the old winter quarters.

Our path led usually along the zigzag line of rifle-pits running down hill from Fort Stedman to a narrow branch flowing through the bottom. Here we could count on finding tiny terrapins no bigger than a dollar, black with orange spots. In the slopes along the branch the "spreading adders" loved to sun themselves on warm spring days. Brilliant with brown and yellow patterns, they looked formidable enough when they puffed out the loose skin of their necks behind their flat ugly heads, like the cobras in the Natural History book. We firmly believed they were very dangerous and admired our own prow-

ess in killing them, but they were probably harmless. And in the dell there were not only dragons but treasures, for the dewberries and blackberries gave delicious excuse for frequent halts in early summer, and in September the golden-rod grew in gorgeous masses by the edges of the run. On the opposite slope the path led up through a dark pine wood where the carpet of brown pine needles covered the breastworks so smoothly and thickly it was hard to keep one's footing. At the top of the slope was Fort Haskell, deep in the heart of the wood, where it was dim and gloomy and cool even on a summer day. Turkey-buzzards nested in the trees there—sure sign the spot was rarely visited, and we could always find the wing and tail feathers of the great, hulking, unclean creatures at the foot of the tallest pines. In the deepest corner of the ditch was a small pool with cat-tails, and the dense thickets of ailanthus and matted briars on the ramparts made the place look like the scene of a crime. Somehow we always talked in low tones, and never lingered there long under the vulture-haunted trees and dark embankments of Fort Haskell. It was a relief to pass the last belt of trees, and come out into the edge of the peanut field separating us from "Taylor's," that lay with its outbuildings and apple-orchard on a rise of ground where Fort Morton had been. In summer we took a longer, shadier way though a piece of woods extending to the very edge of the apple-orchard. Often the hands were cutting cord wood there, and to this day whenever I hear a crow caw, it becomes, somehow, instantly blue summer and I am back in Taylor's woods, and smell again the fat-pine and resin that oozed from the new-cut logs on burning July days when I was a boy. Alas, the sawmill has attacked our playground, and a friend who was at Haskell last Christmas wrote me that the devouring saws had swept off the last pine from the buzzard-roost, and that Fort Haskell is bare to the sky, as ugly as ever but mysterious no longer.

Taylor's—that word alone could inspire a chapter. Mr. Dick Taylor, the friend of all the boys in town, was a bachelor and lived in the little brown house with the high porch and surrounding mulberry trees on the hill opposite the Crater. The

ante-bellum house had been demolished in the siege and Fort Morton built on the site. Its embankments were still traceable in the yard and orchard as gently swelling ridges, and of all farms near Petersburg his peanut field was by far the most fertile in bullets and pieces of shell. Mr. Taylor himself farmed enough to keep himself comfortable in a severely simple fashion, and to supply his pack of fox hounds with just the rations of batter-bread and butter-milk that would ensure their leanness and "enterprise." Our arrival was usually announced by the yelping of a score of them around our one wretched puppy, and then on arriving at the house we would find Mr. Taylor smoking on the porch in the midst of a crowd of boys of all ages, from 12 to 20, busy discussing the last fox-hunt or planning a new one. There was no limit to the freedom of the self-invited guest at Taylor's. He did not tell you like a Spanish nobleman, "Señor, my estate belongs to you." That was unnecessary. From the water in the well, purest, coldest, lightest water, in the finest, mossy bucket, with the most generous gourd to drink from, and the deep, cool shade of his mulberries, everything was yours without asking. You seemed to confer rather than receive a favor when you shook down his damsons and loaded not only your stomach, but your 'pants' pockets and 'shirt-jacket' with his June apples or Winesaps. His friends (and what boy in town was not his friend?) were allowed to work their will on the place, and go home bulging with supplies, to come next week for more. Taylor's is the only farm I ever saw run on the principles of the Golden Age. Since his student days at Washington and Lee he had farmed after this dignified fashion, enjoying in peace and plenty the pleasures of conversation, tobacco, hunting, and reading. A hustling age condemns him for preferring corn-bread and fox-hunting to automobiles and the music of the ticker. In Greece he would have been honored as a rural philosopher, leaning rather to the precepts of the Garden than the Porch. Generations of boys in our town knew him and loved him, and the chief charm of our Boyville departed with him when he moved from Prince George to Amelia about the time I finished at 'the University.' I shall never eat apples as good as the Winesaps

we brought home from Taylor's on afternoons in October. In spite of resolutions to save at least one for the morrow, the last of the dozen would go before we had crossed the last peanut-field. How many times have I come home from Taylor's with 27 Minié balls, 8 pieces of shell, 3 Sharp's rifle cartridges, and half a dozen flint arrow heads weighing down my pockets, and a collection of rusty tins under my arms, all in addition to enough hard apples to make one uncomfortable and repentant for a week. It was cold coming across the open hill where the lines of peanut stacks stretched mournfully down to the railroad. It was colder still wading Poor Creek, and coming up the farther hill past Gracie's Salient and the Confederate Cemetery to Blandford Church. By that time it would be dusk, the last flush of sunset disappearing behind the town, and we had to hurry home to supper, followed by Cæsar and Partial Payments and the Latin exercises.

It is strange how differently two aspects of the same landscape may affect you. On the east of our town, to me the battle-fields all bore the stamp of melancholy, while as soon as I turned my face southward the face of the country became more cheerful. Certainly this could not have been because it was really prettier country. As you walk out of Petersburg down the Weldon Railroad, you can see the track quiver away before you in the blazing sun until the rails meet in the distance. And when you are beyond the Confederate works, the face of Dinwiddie County offers you only flat corn-field and scrub-oak growing in pure white soil. Only at the left is a fine piece of pine timber. Behind it lies one of our early discoveries. The trees are second growth, sprung up since the war, but they are well grown, and the coolness and sense of quiet space they give with their dark regular lines and freedom from all obstructing underbrush made them always a delicious retreat from the corn-fields round about. Whenever I read of cathedral aisles of trees I think first of those pines and their beauty when the sun sent his evening rays slanting between the ranks of red brown columns and threw their long shadows across the forest floor. What sweet, sad, satisfying music the wind made, breathing through the branches as we sat listening on the breastworks. To sit there was to feel

the same awe that seizes you at the sight of high mountains or the sea, and indeed not even the sound of surf upon the shore has more power over the imagination than the voice of God moving among the trees of the garden.

Behind the wood lay the finest of all our playgrounds, a three-gun battery in an angle of the Confederate line, with ditch, parapet, embrasures, gun-emplacements, all complete as if the engineers had just smoothed down the last bit of turf. Only the guns are missing, and the cannoneers in grey who manned them. The three embrasures at the angle are covered from shell-fire on the exposed side by a huge "traverse" or "curtain" of earth, and the guns were trained to sweep a wide arc of the plain, now a field of sedge. In spring the ditch was vocal with frogs, and at the main angle grew a "blood-apple tree," which was a name of our own invention for the stunted, thorny apple trees that grew wild along the breastworks. In fall the persimmons were plentiful too. But best of all, in the smooth open sunny space between the inner side of the battery and the edge of the ravine beyond, grew a veritable Cadmus crop — tall milkweed and the mullein stalks, which, brown and dry in autumn, made the finest kind of spears. There on October afternoons, when the air had begun to be nipping, we gathered these in armfuls, and "drank delight of battle with our peers," throwing and warding off or dodging the javelins as we charged back and forth over the entrenchments.

The line from the three-gun battery followed the edge of the ravine for about a quarter of a mile until it stopped at the nearly perpendicular brink of a deep, heavily wooded valley, through which flowed a branch of Lieutenant Run. For some time this "jumping-off place" was the limit of our explorations in this direction. Not until the town dammed the valley and cut out the trees to make a reservoir did we discover that a road led by a winding descent from behind our battery down into the bottom of the marshy valley. This road was wide and carefully graded, but trees of many years growth had sprung up in it, and instead of leading to any farm, it ran across the valley, then up a smooth ascent, also tree-grown, and at the other side was a great star-shaped fort pierced for many guns, with ditches and em-

bankments of unusual depth and thickness. On both sides of the valley the course of the road was followed by rows of sunken pits dug in the slope of the bank, having each an entrance on the down-hill side away from the breastworks.

To us boys of fifteen the discovery of them under the oak and hickory leaves of thirty years brought the same thrill felt by the explorers in the mounds of Babylon. For the burrows were the remains of bomb-proofs, the road was made for caissons and cannon and led to the reserve park and the horse-camps of the Confederate Artillery hidden in the valley. I do not know what brigade or division it was which inhabited the burrows on the slope behind their guns, fighting human foes and hunger through the hard winter of 1864-65. We know Lee wrote to the War Department in Richmond on February 9th: "Yesterday, the most inclement day of the winter, the troops were greatly exposed in line of battle for two days, had been without meat for three days, and in scant clothing, took the cold hail and sleet." To-day the oaks and hickories cover the old camps deeper every year and children play over the ditches and parapets Lee's "Miserables" defended, but the three-gun battery in the angle by the pine wood is still as good as new and the embrasures still sweep the plain before them as if waiting for the charging foe in blue who comes no more.

All our crowd collected something — stamps or birds' eggs or Indian arrow-heads. With true collector's fever we used to go out Saturday after Saturday and scour the fields for Minié balls. We learned to keep our eyes fixed on the ground as we went up one furrow and down the next, and to judge with great accuracy between the blue of fossil mussel shells and the blue of weathered lead. The most finds were made in the gullies that crossed the fields diagonally, for these gathered the washings of many corn-rows. Some days the bigger boys would find between fifty and a hundred 'minnies.' Pieces of shell were almost as easy to find as bullets, but somehow less interesting. A handful of rusty iron shards made your 'pants' pockets sag woefully at the end of a ten-mile walk. Much more treasured were canteens, especially if the leaden mouthpiece were still intact, while the tins of cartridge-boxes were so common we hardly kept account

of them. Rarer and more valuable were friction-primers, the metallic cartridges for the Sharp's rifle, and such things as broken bayonet-shanks, and the rings that bound the wood and barrel of the Springfield. One day we found a whole artillery bucket in the bed of Poor Creek, all of sole leather studded with brass rivets, and lugged the huge treasure home. Of whole unexploded shells, round and fish-shaped, we had a considerable collection buried under the old apple tree in the garden. Much more interesting was a blackened sheet of tin I found in a glade under the young oaks that grow behind Fort Hell. Some company cook had improvised a corn grater out of the tin of a case-shot by punching it full of holes so that the jagged edges roughened all one side of the sheet. It was plain what implement he had used. The triangular holes of varying sizes could have been made only with a tapering three-cornered punch — his bayonet. That was something personal, almost domestic, and I picked up the smoke-grimed bit of tin with more eagerness than half a dozen Minié balls. Commonest relics of all were the preserve tins, "Yankee meat-cans," we called them, that littered the woods by the thousand for miles around the Federal Forts. Could anything be uglier or more trivial, less eloquent of the glory and pomp of war than these reminders that armies always travel on their bellies? Yet those piles of rusty tin explain the final victory of the North.

Of all the walks south of town the one to the National Cemetery offered the most recompense. After passing Butterworth's Bridge you could go straight down the railroad to Fort Wadsworth. Or you would keep to the track only as far as the negro race-track grounds at Acree, then turn off by the white house and go on past Fort Tracy and Fort Urmston, the shorter way to Poplar Grove. That white house was very still and mysterious, surrounded by flat dusty country that reflected heat like an oven, and with its closed blinds perpetually blinking in the blaze of the sun. But the water you got there was good, unlike that in many wells of the negro cabins. In these the water was often scarcely ten feet below the rickety planks around the windlass, or there was no windlass at all, and you dipped up the muddy water to suit yourself. Such a well was the one in Fort

Wadsworth, the great star-shaped fort with a field of corn included between its bastions. It lies directly beside the railroad, and the passengers on the through trains from New York to Florida can see its red clay embankment as they thunder past, if they only knew when and where to look, and have not forgotten there was such a thing as the war. When the history of the siege of Petersburg is written, one of the chapters will be devoted to Fort Wadsworth, for few deeds of arms of Lee's soldiers deserve better to be known than Hagood's wild charge on Warren here, August, '64, in Lee's attempt to recapture the railroad. Caught in a death trap, a small Confederate Brigade led by their brigadier dashed upon the Federal Corps behind entrenchments. When the day was over, the dusty woods were strewn with the lean corpses of the South Carolinians.

From Fort Wadsworth it is but a mile or two over flat unoccupied land, overgrown with sassafras and old-field pines, to Poplar Grove, once the terminus of the military road from City Point, and the seat of Army Headquarters, now the National Cemetery. Scattered everywhere throughout the South, but most of all in Virginia, are these cemeteries, oases of greenest lawns and trim walks in the midst of the parched summer landscape. Each one has its keeper's home of gray stone at the entrance, and its stout gray-mustached keeper, a veteran whose speech when he welcomes visitors with the cordiality of a lonely man, shows that long residence in the South has not affected his accent. Each, too, has its formal arrangement of black painted cannon around the flagstaff mound, and all show, too, the same iron tablets with quotations from Theodore O'Hara's *Bivouac of the Dead*. Probably few who have read "On fame's eternal camping ground their silent tents are spread," and the rest of the noble lines, know that their author himself died in the Confederate service. In the corner under the tallest pines are some few lines of stones set off by themselves that belong also to the side of the vanquished. They mingle peacefully enough now perhaps, wherever they are, the men who were buried under the one as well as the other. But read one inscription, and you will go on to read others, and suddenly you feel more clearly than ever before that armies are made up of



men, that the great corps was after all so many Johns and Andrews, mostly very young men, or rather boys, and every one of them, for all he was a soldier, as anxious to live as you or I, and thinking most often of when he would get back to Michigan or New Hampshire. Now they lie under the smooth grass by the low wall of the National Cemetery, and the feathery clumps of soft pine boughs throw their shadows over them, and the brilliant red and white of the flag flutters over them, under the deep cloudless blue of the Virginia sky, and the sacred soil holds them as tenderly in its bosom as it does the others, those whose dust lies in Hollywood and Blandford.

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